

# Transformative policies and policy coherence to realize the 2030 Agenda in Canada

Integration of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development into policies, plans and programs provides direction to government institutions and other stakeholders in the implementation process, signalling national priorities and efforts to address sustainable development gaps. Policy integration incorporates the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and their targets and indicators, as well as guiding overall efforts with the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda such as leaving no one behind, human rights-based approaches and progress within planetary boundaries. The 2030 Agenda is universal, integrated and indivisible. This calls for the Government of Canada to ensure policy coherence within and across levels of government and in terms of the impacts of the Government of Canada's domestic policies on the realization of the agenda globally.

## Key messages

- There is a crucial need for the Government of Canada to analyze existing policies and identify gaps in light of the SDGs. Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy should be informed by these policy gaps and priorities identified through the national consultation process. The National Strategy should address gaps and ensure policy coherence.
- Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy should be guided by the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda and demonstrate commitment to progress within Canada and globally, recognizing the impacts of domestic policies on global public goods and efforts in other countries.
- The Government of Canada should take steps to ensure policy coherence for sustainable development through policies and the establishment of systems to ensure coherence between and among government institutions, between and across levels of government, and in terms of the impacts of domestic policies on global progress.



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## Introduction

In 2015, world leaders adopted the United Nations' [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#). The 2030 Agenda, which introduced 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), sets out a transformative plan for people and planet. It aims to promote shared prosperity, environmental sustainability and progress on sustainable development that leaves no one behind. Realizing the ambitions of the 2030 Agenda requires a whole-of-society approach. Governments, citizens, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector all have roles to play in contributing to sustainable development outcomes.

Nearly four years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, many countries have put in place building blocks for its implementation as shown by civil society reviews of government reporting to the [United Nations High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development](#) in [2016](#), [2017](#) and [2018](#). Many countries have integrated the SDGs into policy frameworks. Institutional and governance mechanisms have been established to oversee and evaluate progress on implementation. Partnerships across sectors are forming, while systems for monitoring and evaluation are being put in place. However, progress has been mixed across countries, particularly in terms of the extent to which countries have localized implementation of the 2030 Agenda, integrated its transformative elements into policies and practices, and developed enabling environments that promote whole-of-society contributions to sustainable development.

## Policies for 2030 Agenda implementation

A key element in ensuring effective implementation is integration of the 2030 Agenda, including its transformative elements, into policies, plans and programs. In this context, policy coherence is important for advancing the agenda through integrated approaches that recognize the interlinked nature of the SDGs as well as linkages between domestic actions and progress at local, national, regional and global levels. Policy coherence is not automatic and requires dedicated efforts through government leadership, policies and institutionalized mechanisms. Importantly, policy coherence is featured under SDG 17 on partnerships for the goals. [Target 17.14](#) commits countries to enhance policy coherence for sustainable development as measured by the number of countries with mechanisms to ensure policy coherence in place. According to the [International Institute for Sustainable Development](#), policy coherence for sustainable development includes three key dimensions.

- Domestic coherence: Coherence at the domestic level in terms of national and sub-national policies that reinforce each other.
- International coherence: Coherence to ensure domestic policies have positive effects across borders.
- Temporal coherence: coherence in terms of the temporal dimensions of sustainable development with efforts that consider future generations.



This policy brief outlines emerging standard and good practices with respect to policy coherence and integration of the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda with the aim of informing Canada's approach. It is based on a review of country reporting to the High-level Political Forum over the 2016–18 period through [Voluntary National Review \(VNR\)](#) reports, which collectively serve as a key element of international follow-up and review of 2030 Agenda implementation. Also, interviews were conducted with 13 civil society organizations in 12 countries<sup>1</sup> to validate information presented in VNR reports. In addition to identifying emerging practices, the brief provides an overview of key considerations for the Canadian context and concludes with recommendations for Canada. An annex with detailed information on the specific good practices highlighted in this brief serves as a useful resource for the Government of Canada and other stakeholders interested in the adoption and promotion of good practices for 2030 Agenda implementation.

## What is a good practice?

### TRANSFORMATIVE ELEMENTS OF THE 2030 AGENDA

A good practice is an activity or approach that demonstrates incorporation of one or more of the transformative elements of the

<sup>1</sup> Interviews were carried out with civil society organizations from the following countries: Bhutan, Brazil, Colombia Finland (two interviewees), Germany, Guatemala, Hungary, Ireland, Nepal, Portugal, Switzerland and Uganda. This brief also includes a number of good practices based on VNR reports for other countries, but it should be noted that information for these countries could not be validated beyond additional Web-based searches.

2030 Agenda. The agenda is human rights-based and focuses on the inclusion of, and change for, the poorest and most vulnerable by promoting their inherent dignity and human rights through efforts to leave no one behind. Efforts are informed by inclusivity, solidarity and participation. The 2030 Agenda is universal in that it applies to all countries and people. The economic, social and environmental pillars of the 2030 Agenda are of equal importance, with the SDGs being integrated and indivisible—achievements under any one goal are linked to progress on others. Implementation of the agenda should occur with respect for planetary boundaries and inter-generational responsibility, recognizing the need to protect the planet’s resources now and for future generations. Good practices respect the aspirational nature of the 2030 Agenda, demonstrably moving beyond standard practices or business-as-usual approaches. Finally, the 2030 Agenda is grounded in commitments to transparency and accountability. Importantly, good practices respect the aspirational nature of the 2030 Agenda, demonstrably moving beyond standard practices or business-as-usual approaches. Finally, the 2030 Agenda is grounded in commitments to transparency and accountability.

-  **HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH**
-  **LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND**
-  **INTEGRATED AND INDIVISIBLE**
-  **INCLUSIVITY AND PARTICIPATION**
-  **PROGRESS WITHIN PLANETARY BOUNDARIES**
-  **INTERGENERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY**
-  **ASPIRATIONAL**
-  **TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

In the context of policies for 2030 Agenda implementation, the transformative elements translate into a number of good practice areas.

**INTEGRATING THE 2030 AGENDA INTO POLICIES, PLANS AND PROGRAMS**

Good practice is informing policies by gap and baseline assessments<sup>2</sup> and integrating the 2030 Agenda into overarching and sectoral policies, with provisions to ensure policy coherence. Good practice is translating policies that support the 2030 Agenda into plans, program, budgets and monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems.

**POLICIES GUIDED BY THE TRANSFORMATIVE ELEMENTS OF THE 2030 AGENDA**

The transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda provide a basis for overall approaches to its implementation. Good practice is efforts that are guided by these transformative elements through policies, plans and programs.

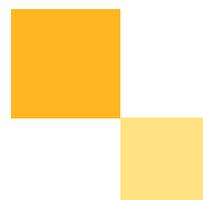
**ENSURING POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

Achievement of the 2030 Agenda requires domestic, international and temporal policy coherence. This means policy coherence between different levels of government, in terms of the impacts of domestic policies on global progress and consideration for the impacts of current policies on future generations. Addressing policy coherence through policies and institutional systems is good practice. Policy coherence for 2030 Agenda implementation requires various government institutions at different levels of government to work together and good practice is identifying suitable systems and mechanisms to do so.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY APPROACHES**

Policies should be developed through inclusive and participatory processes that support a whole-of-society approach to 2030 Agenda implementation. In addition, a range of government institutions are implicated by the 2030 Agenda given the interlinked nature of the SDGs and have a role to play in implementation. Government institutions at national and local levels should be involved in the preparation of national policy frameworks and lead on integrating the agenda into their respective policy domains, with attention to ensuring policy coherence.

<sup>2</sup> The policy brief on [gap and baseline assessments](#) in this series provides a detailed overview of emerging standard and good practices in this area.



## Standard Practices

According to the latest civil society [review](#) of VNR reports, reporting on integration of the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda into policies is limited in VNR reports overall. Information is also limited on efforts to ensure policy coherence.<sup>3</sup>

VNR reports for 2016–18 suggest that carrying out policy and/or data assessments to inform implementation is a standard practice. For 88 countries that reported to the High-level Political Forum over 2017–18, 23 reported having carried out a policy and data assessment against the SDGs. An additional 18 countries mapped their policies. The development of a national sustainable development strategy that integrates the SDGs is also a standard practice. Nearly half of the countries that reported to the High-level Political Forum in 2017 and 2018 highlighted incorporating the SDGs into national policies. How the SDGs have been translated into programs, including budgets, is less clear. Few countries have reported efforts to align their budgets with the 2030 Agenda, suggesting that incorporating the SDGs into national budgets is not yet a standard practice.

With respect to the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda, standard practice appears to be the inclusion of the SDGs—but not the other elements of the 2030 Agenda—in policies. While some countries have taken the first step towards policy coherence by assessing gaps and identifying responsible government institutions for 2030 Agenda implementation, there is little evidence of emerging standard practices on policy coherence for 2030 Agenda implementation in VNR reports overall.<sup>4</sup> Finally, VNR reports suggest that countries are adopting participatory approaches to selecting national priorities that inform policies. Fifty-seven countries reported consulting with non-state actors on national priorities in 2017 and 2018.

## Good Practices

While carrying out gap and baseline assessments is a standard practice in 2030 Agenda implementation, good practice is ensuring that assessments inform national priorities and integration of the 2030 Agenda into policies, plans and programs. Also, emerging good practice is ensuring integration of the 2030 Agenda in overarching sustainable development policies and sectoral policies, including in

ways that support policy coherence. Establishing specific action plans that outline how implementation will occur, including in terms of ensuring policy coherence, is also a good practice.

Good practices include developing policies, plans and programs that integrate the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda. Policies should be ambitious, inclusive, participatory, and integrated, be grounded in human rights frameworks, work to leave no one behind, respect inter-generational equity, and realize progress within planetary boundaries. Efforts to ensure domestic, international and temporal policy coherence are also good practice, including the use of overarching policies and institutional approaches to break down siloed approaches to ensure integrated policies and programs. Good practices to support policy coherence include establishing a commitment to policy coherence, establishment of coordination mechanisms and other institutionalized systems, and making effective use of technology.

## POLICY ASSESSMENTS

Policy gaps should inform integration of the 2030 Agenda into policies, with steps taken to address gaps and ensure policy coherence. An audit was conducted in **Brazil** to highlight the government's preparedness to implement the SDGs. A methodological approach was developed that emphasizes policy coherence and integration for SDG implementation. **Greece** completed an in-depth analysis and mapping of all relevant national policies and legal frameworks. The mapping specifically focused on identifying areas of insufficient action and where cross-sectoral collaboration could be improved. In **Lebanon**, the SDG parliamentary committee has started mapping existing legislation that is related to the 2030 Agenda. In **Pakistan**, the national government established a plan to analyze and identify gaps in SDG policies at the provincial level. This plan ensures aims to ensure domestic policy coherence.

In terms of informing policies from gap assessments, **Bhutan's Vulnerability Baseline Assessment** set a baseline to track vulnerable groups and formulate appropriate policies to leave no one behind in 2030 Agenda implementation. The assessment translated into a number of policy areas, including gender equality, addressing the needs of persons with disabilities and targeted poverty reduction programs.

<sup>3</sup> It is outside the scope of this policy brief to undertake a full review of country efforts to improve policy coherence beyond information available in VNR reports and interviews with civil society organizations. Nevertheless, a rich body of research and analysis exists. A key contributor in this context is the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which has historically promoted policy coherence for sustainable development among its members. With a focus on international dimensions, the OECD's Development Assistance Committee [peer reviews](#) examine efforts by members. The OECD emphasizes strong government commitment and leadership, coherent policies, institutional mechanisms and capacities to address coherence issues, and monitoring and evaluation as critical elements for ensuring policy coherence for sustainable development. See [Policy Coherence for Sustainable Report 2018](#) for a detailed analysis. Country [profiles](#) on institutional arrangements to promote policy coherence for sustainable development are also available.

<sup>4</sup> See [Progressing National SDGs Implementation \(Third Edition\)](#) for a detailed analysis of reporting on policy coherence in VNR reports.

### POLICY FRAMEWORKS

An emerging standard practice is the integration of the SDGs into overarching national sustainable development frameworks. Good practice includes further integrating the 2030 Agenda into sectoral plans and establishing an action plan or roadmap to support implementation that focuses on how implementation will occur rather than substantive priorities.

In terms of sectoral policies, multiple government institutions in **Armenia** have incorporated SDG targets and indicators into relevant policies and strategies. Although lengthy, this process has allowed for better planning, monitoring and evaluation. Some of the sectors included in the process are health care, education and the environment. In **Egypt**, the National Committee ensures that there is coherence among sectoral strategies and plans and that environmental and social dimensions are integrated in these plans, strategies, and programs. **Greece's** Office of Coordination, Institutional, International and European Affairs internalizes the SDGs and ensures that all existing or new policies are aligned by working with government institutions. The legislature in **Guatemala** adopt a series of laws in the spirit of the SDGs in areas such as agriculture, food security, youth employment, and education, demonstrating political commitment to the 2030 Agenda. The country's national strategic plan has also harmonized with the SDGs, covering the period 2015—32.

**Ireland, Kenya, Laos** and **Uganda** have established 2030 Agenda implementation plans. **Ireland's** [Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018-2020](#) outlines how to integrate the SDGs into all policy areas and overcome inconsistencies. In addition to policy alignment, it focuses on raising public awareness, participation in implementation and support for communities to advance the SDGs. **Kenya** incorporated the SDGs into [national plans](#) and developed a [SDGs roadmap](#) to guide the transition from the Millennium Development Goals to the SDGs in consultation with national and local governments, civil society and development partners. The country is also using performance contracts and strategic plans for government institutions to mainstream the SDGs. The roadmap includes stakeholder mapping and establishing partnerships, advocacy and sensitization, localization, mainstreaming and accelerating implementation, resource mobilization, tracking and reporting, and capacity building. **Laos** set out a SDG roadmap that emphasizes institutional strengthening and partnerships as well as includes parameters for reporting and accountability. In **Uganda**, a roadmap for 2030 Agenda implementation was developed.

### FROM POLICIES TO PROGRAMS AND BUDGETS

**Nepal's** approach shows good practice by integrating the SDGs into policies and then supporting their implementation through programming and budgeting. The national budget is explicitly linked to the SDGs through an inter-ministerial system and focal points. Under three high-level committees and in Nepal's 14<sup>th</sup> national plan the country includes the SDGs and national indicators that identify priorities for spending, coded to specific SDGs assigned to all national programs.

### TRANSFORMATIVE POLICIES

Good practice is including all aspects of the 2030 Agenda in policies and approaches to implementation. The 2030 Agenda is about more than the SDGs. Unfortunately, VNR reports suggest that most countries interpret policy integration of the 2030 Agenda to be integration of the SDGs. This limited view of policy integration is a missed opportunity to ensure that the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda are embedded in policy and practice. A limited number of good practice examples emerged from the review of VNR reports and interviews with civil society organizations.

**Ireland's** 2030 Agenda implementation plan includes a commitment that the country's overall approach will be guided by the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda and other principles. The plan refers to equity between generations, gender equity, respect for ecological integrity and biodiversity, social equity, respect for cultural heritage and diversity, and equity between countries and regions as key themes in Ireland's approach to sustainable development.

**Japan** took steps to incorporate transformative elements into their approaches to 2030 Agenda implementation. The country used a comprehensive method of identifying guiding principles for implementation including universality, inclusiveness, participation, integration, transparency and accountability. These principles were established through a series of roundtables over three months with civil society organizations, academia, the private sector and international organizations.

### AMBITIOUS

**Ireland's** implementation plan respects the aspirational nature of the 2030 Agenda. Recognizing that meaningful SDG implementation requires countries to translate global ambitions to the national context, Ireland's 2030 Vision, which is part of the country's implementation plan, includes ambitious high-level commitments that address the 17 SDGs. According to the country's VNR report, the government plans to review the 2030 Vision on a rolling basis to ensure that it remains ambitious as new SDG implementation plans are developed.

### HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED

Countries have incorporated the human rights-based nature of the 2030 Agenda into their policies and approaches in different ways.

**Australia** committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda through a human rights-based approach. It will draw on legal commitments, policies, institutions and programs to promote and protect rights at all levels of government as well as globally. This approach includes assessments of legislation against international human rights commitments, use of institutions such as the country's Human Rights Commission, and international cooperation to promote human rights at regional and global levels.

**Armenia** and **Hungary** are plan to adopt a human rights-based approach to monitoring progress on the 2030 Agenda. **Armenia** is collecting data for SDG indicators on a regular basis and with appropriate levels of disaggregation, through a participatory and consultative approach. **Hungary's** [Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights](#) plans to monitor progress on the 2030 Agenda in light of the country's existing human rights monitoring systems and will provide advice and expertise to the government on a human rights-based approach to data.

VNR reports for **Hungary** and **Portugal** made strong linkages between the 2030 Agenda and human rights frameworks. The reports presented the SDGs in light of specific international human rights frameworks. While the inclusion of such frameworks in VNR reports does not guarantee a human rights-based approach to implementation, it does provide an entry point for civil society organizations and citizens to advocate for the governments to ensure that 2030 Agenda implementation is grounded in human rights frameworks.

### LEAVE NO ONE BEHIND

**Ireland's** [implementation plan](#) states that "every person is entitled to a life of dignity in which they can fulfil their full potential" and "pledges that no one will be left behind." The plan also includes a commitment to take steps to reach those furthest behind first. The inclusion of leaving no one behind as an overarching approach to 2030 Agenda implementation is good practice.

### INTEGRATED APPROACHES TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

In addition to leaving no one behind, **Ireland's** implementation plan includes a commitment to ensuring that efforts are guided by the fundamentally linked and interdependent nature of the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. To support this commitment, the government mapped out policies related to the 2030 Agenda, with attention to a range of sectoral policies that are mutually supportive of specific SDGs.

### POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

SDG target 17.14 calls for countries to improve policy coherence. Realizing greater policy coherence requires the establishment of policies and systems to ensure coherence between and across different levels of government. It also means developing approaches that address the impacts of domestic policies on sustainable development progress globally and for future generations. Countries have developed a range of approaches to ensuring policy coherence, though no example was found of a country that has adopted systems to ensure domestic, international and temporal policy coherence.

### DOMESTIC POLICY COHERENCE

In terms of domestic policy coherence, examples exist of countries making use of policies, institutional mechanisms and technology to ensure policy coherence. In **Ecuador**, there is a binding resolution that requires government institutions, including the legislature, to adopt the 2030 Agenda.

In terms of institutional mechanisms, government institutions in **Andorra** must demonstrate how their actions are associated with at least one SDG for initiatives provided to the main government decision making body, the Council of Ministers, for approval. This approach has resulted in an assessment of the conformity of national policies with the 2030 Agenda. **Slovenia** has a permanent inter-ministerial working group that serves as a coordination mechanism to promote policy coherence and solve policy conflicts. The group includes two representatives from each ministry who are the main focal points for 2030 Agenda implementation. In **Turkey**, all ministries are expected to align their respective policies and fulfil their roles in implementing the SDGs.

Finally, **Benin** has developed an application to measure contributions by government institutions to the SDGs. The application, called MeSODD, makes it possible to assess the level of alignment of each ministry with the achievement of the SDGs including with respect to how activities relate to SDG priority targets. The application helps to focus attention on actions that could lead to inter-sectoral synergies for achieving the SDGs as well as outline comprehensive, collaborative and specific measures that should be followed by government institutions to make progress on the SDGs.

### INTERNATIONAL POLICY COHERENCE

As highlighted in successive civil society reviews of VNR reports, some countries have taken steps to report on international dimensions of policy coherence, though the practice is not widespread. VNR reporting by **Germany, Finland, Romania, Spain** and **Sweden** highlights various efforts to promote international policy coherence.

At the legislative level, Finland, Spain and Sweden have taken steps to ensure international policy coherence. In **Finland**, steps have been taken to improve the legislative process to ensure that there is coherence on actions taken at domestic and global levels. There is also a coordination body dedicated to policy coherence and inter-sectoral coherence and Finland's national follow-up system includes indicators on global issues. **Spain** is developing an impact analysis framework for legislation that evaluates the potential impact of policies on the SDGs. The framework will look at the impact of national policies on other countries and global public goods as well as the expansion of foreign policy initiatives that promote the SDGs. It will be part of parliamentary accountability mechanisms and inform the annual progress report on the 2030 Agenda. **Sweden** has legislation to ensure international policy coherence. The [policy for global development](#) supports coherence of all domestic policy areas contributing to sustainable development globally and highlights transparency when conflicts of interest occur between domestic policies and impacts on global sustainable development.

Other examples of good practice include monitoring international policy coherence and building capacity for greater coherence.

**Germany** established indicators to ensure policy coherence for sustainable development and measure domestic and global impacts of policies. The [Federation of Romanian Nongovernmental Organizations for Development](#) organized training on the international dimensions of policy coherence in **Romania**, which aimed to improve understanding of how international dimensions of policy coherence apply to SDG implementation and was attended by representatives of ministries and civil society organizations.

## KEY TEMPORAL POLICY COHERENCE

As part of its Office of the Commissioner for Fundamental Rights, **Hungary** has an [Ombudsman for Future Generations](#). The ombudsman is unique and has an overarching mandate to protect the interests of future generations. The ombudsman has made recommendations for SDG implementation and is set to play an important role in implementation to support inter-generational equity, thereby contributing to temporal policy coherence. **Malta's** [Guardian for Future Generations](#) has a legislated mandate to safeguard inter-generational and intra-generational sustainable development. The Guardian convenes on a quarterly basis, and includes a four person board with representatives for civil society and the environment, the private sector and the economy, and society and community affairs. Among other duties, the Guardian advocates for sustainable development, audits sectors that contribute to sustainable development, proposes actions that government institutions could take, socializes sustainable development among the citizenry and non-state actors.

## INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY POLICY MAKING

The inclusion of non-state actors in developing national priorities to inform policies for 2030 Agenda implementation is a standard practice. The policy brief on [multi-stakeholder engagement](#) in this series provides several examples of inclusive and participatory approaches in this context.

## Policies for 2030 Agenda implementation in Canada

### POLICY FRAMEWORKS

The Government of Canada is currently consulting with citizens and organizations to develop Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy, emphasizing the need for a whole-of-society approach by bringing together all levels of government, Indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and citizens. Many policies, plans and programs align well with the SDGs and have been identified as supportive of the country's progress towards attaining the goals. As noted in the discussion guide prepared for the consultations, they include Canada's [Poverty Reduction Strategy](#), [Federal Sustainable Development Strategy](#), [Feminist International Assistance Policy](#), [Gender Results Framework](#), [Innovation and Skills Plan](#) and [Social Innovation and Social Finance Strategy](#).<sup>5</sup> Canada has also signed onto a range of international agreements that support 2030 Agenda implementation and particular SDGs.

### CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL COMMITMENTS THAT SUPPORT 2030 AGENDA IMPLEMENTATION

- [Addis Ababa Action Agenda](#)
- [Beijing Declaration](#) on gender equality
- Environmental conventions and agreements, including the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#)
- [Global Partnership for Effective Development Co-operation](#)
- [Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness](#)
- [Paris Agreement](#) on climate change
- [Quito Declaration](#) which accelerates action on SDG 11 on sustainable cities and communities
- [Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction](#)
- [The Grand Bargain](#)
- United Nations' [human rights framework](#), including the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#)

<sup>5</sup> The discussion guide is available by emailing [Programme2030-2030Agenda@canada.gc.ca](mailto:Programme2030-2030Agenda@canada.gc.ca) between March 15 and May 15, 2019.

The [draft Federal Sustainable Development Strategy](#) for 2019–22 specifically aligns with the 2030 Agenda SDGs and their targets. The Feminist International Assistance Policy also demonstrates strong synergies with the goals, with every action area aligning with at least one SDG. The SDGs are briefly mentioned in the Poverty Reduction Strategy and the long-term target of the strategy is aligned with SDG 1 on no poverty. There have also been efforts to integrate the 2030 Agenda at provincial and local levels. Alberta has established a group of government institutions and civil society organizations to work together in examining how the SDGs can function as a common framework for measuring provincial progress in the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development. In Quebec, the [Comité interministériel du développement durable](#) (interdepartmental committee on sustainable development) guides the Government of Quebec on sustainable development, including efforts to promote sustainable development in policies, plans and programs and ensure policy coherence across provincial government institutions. In 2017, the City of Fort St. John established a 5 year [Strategic Plan](#) aligned with the SDGs. Fort St. John's priorities include a commitment to community development, environmental responsibility, and sound public management that meets future community needs. While these efforts are significant and noteworthy, these efforts have been ad hoc and not part of a broader coordinated strategy to integrate the goals at the sub-national level.

### TRANSFORMATIVE ELEMENTS

Canada has succeeded in beginning to incorporate some of the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda into national policies. Inter-generational equity is mentioned in the draft Federal Sustainable Development Strategy and was included in [Bill C-57](#) to amend the Federal Sustainable Development Act, which received royal assent in February 2019. Canada's 2018 [VNR report](#) made a strong commitment to leave no one behind and highlighted actions being undertaken in reporting on each SDG. To leave no one behind and combat inequality, the Government of Canada has focused on two key areas, the Government is targeting its efforts to improve the lives of historically marginalized people in Canada as well as supporting global efforts to leave no one behind. The policy brief on multi-stakeholder engagement in this series provides an overview of key groups at risk of being left behind in Canada. Given the importance of reconciliation efforts underway in Canada, Canada's efforts to leave no one behind in partnership with Indigenous peoples are of note.

Canada's commitment to supporting Indigenous communities to tackle the challenges and barriers that they face is also part

of efforts by the Government of Canada to leave no one behind. Challenges include contending with the legacy of colonialism, discrimination, previously failed government policies and building a new nation-to-nation relationship based on reconciliation. Addressing these challenges can be strengthened by appealing to the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), a critical rights-based framework, during implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The use of other international human rights treaties can also enable Canada to incorporate the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda into national implementation, thereby strengthening the country's ability to fully attain the SDGs by 2030.

Internationally, the Feminist International Assistance Policy seeks to eradicate poverty and build a more peaceful, inclusive and prosperous world by directly supporting gender equality in countries that are at risk of being left behind globally. The policy is grounded in a human rights-based approach.

### POLICY COHERENCE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Policy coherence and adopting a government-wide approach to the SDGs are crucial for effectively implementing the 2030 Agenda in Canada. Canada's 2018 VNR report does not articulate a strategy for addressing policy coherence at any level in the Canadian context. However, the report notes the importance of collaborating with provincial, territorial, municipal, Indigenous and other stakeholders for SDG implementation.

As a first step to ensuring policy coherence, it is critical that individual government institutions review their policies on SDG compliance and with attention to policy coherence. Since the spring 2018 release of the Office of the Auditor General of Canada's [report](#) on Canada's preparedness to achieve the 2030 Agenda, federal government institutions have started policy reviews. In addition, the [SDG Unit at Employment and Social Development Canada](#) is coordinating a number of working groups that engage relevant government institutions at the federal level on 2030 Agenda implementation. However, sectors that are relevant to sustainable development such as health and the environment are managed at multiple levels of government in Canada.

Complex sustainable development issues fall under the responsibility of several levels of government. These issues are often too complex to be effectively addressed by a single actor and thus require the insights, experiences and expertise of various institutions at different levels of government. For this reason, domestic policy coherence is critical for effective SDG implementation in Canada and leadership by the federal government plays a key role in promoting efforts by other levels of government. Canada's 2030 Agenda National

Strategy, prepared in collaboration with provincial, territorial and municipal governments, citizens, civil society organizations, academia and the private sector, could serve to unify different actors under the common objective of realizing the 2030 Agenda. Canada's decentralized political structure poses a challenge for implementing a national strategy on one hand, though provides an opportunity for localized, creative problem solving and policy development on the other. There is an opportunity for the federal government to make use of existing coordination mechanisms between levels of government, such as roundtables, to introduce the 2030 Agenda to sub-national counterparts and have ongoing discussions about collaboration and policy coherence for implementation.

In terms of international policy coherence, the Feminist International Assistance Policy does not make a clear statement about linkages between domestic and international policies. [Peer reviews](#) of Canada's support for international development have called on the country to embed international policy coherence within government institutions, including by setting clear priorities for implementation, analysis, monitoring and reporting. There is a need for Canada to establish a clear commitment to international policy coherence, matched with appropriate mechanisms and guidance for implementation. Canada's VNR report included both national and international dimensions in reporting on each SDG. This approach is welcomed for its demonstration that SDG implementation cannot merely focus on either domestic or foreign policy. That being said, international policy coherence is not only about Canada's international development efforts but also includes an additional

crucial aspect: the impact of Canada's domestic policies on global development. Canada can significantly influence global sustainable development outcomes through efforts related to its coastlines, boreal forests and migration policies for example. As a result, Canada has extra responsibility to ensure domestic policies in a number of key areas do not hamper but rather support global sustainable development in line with the 2030 Agenda.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, with respect to temporal policy coherence, [Bill C-57](#) introduced inter-generational equity into Canada's planning around sustainable development. The act makes inter-generational equity an important principle to ensure government decision-making is done with consideration of future generations. Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy offers another opportunity to ensure temporal policy coherence by including strong commitments and mechanisms in this area.

#### **INCLUSIVE AND PARTICIPATORY POLICY MAKING**

The policy brief on [multi-stakeholder engagement](#) in this series outlines existing good practices in Canada and offers recommendations to ensure that Canada's implementation of the 2030 Agenda is inclusive and participatory. So far, the Government of Canada's consultations to develop its 2030 Agenda National Strategy have been participatory and inclusive. Consultations on the draft national strategy should be equally inclusive and participatory, with the strategy itself outlining how implementation will occur in a similar manner.



Photo: Nutrition International

<sup>6</sup> For more information on areas where Canada has a significant impact on global sustainable development outcomes, see [Who and what gets left behind](#) and the [Generation SDG Blueprint](#).



## Recommendations

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Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy offers an opportunity to ensure that Canada's approach to 2030 Agenda implementation is human rights-based, guided by efforts to leave no one behind, respects planetary boundaries and inter-generational equity, and supports domestic, international and temporal policy coherence. Implementation must be inclusive, with collaboration between and among all levels of government, Indigenous peoples, citizens and other stakeholders to ensure that policies are mutually reinforcing and coherent in advancing the SDGs in Canada and globally. A number of key recommendations emerge from the analysis.

### **Provide public information on the outcomes of federal government institutions' policy mapping against the 2030 Agenda and use the 2030 Agenda National Strategy to address gaps.**

The Government of Canada has instructed federal government institutions to map their work against the 2030 Agenda. These efforts should be used to assess policy gaps, including in terms of how the transformative elements of the agenda are guiding policies, interlinkages between policy areas and steps to ensure policy coherence. The results of this mapping should be made public in the spirit of transparency and accountability on 2030 Agenda implementation. Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy should address identified gaps and promote domestic, international and temporal policy coherence.

### **Integrate the 2030 Agenda into overarching and sectoral policies.**

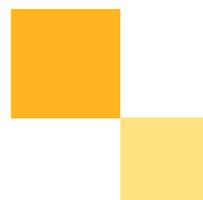
In addition to establishing Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy, sectoral policies should align with the 2030 Agenda. This alignment should give particular attention to interlinkages between the SDGs and domestic, international and temporal policy coherence.

### **Establish an action plan or roadmap for 2030 Agenda implementation as part of the 2030 Agenda National Strategy.**

Canada's 2030 Agenda National Strategy should set out substantive priorities and outline the steps that will be undertaken to implement the 2030 Agenda. Steps include addressing policy integration, awareness raising, participation and multi-stakeholder engagement, capacity development, and monitoring, evaluation and reporting. The action plan or roadmap should consider policy coherence with provincial, territorial and municipal approaches to 2030 Agenda implementation. It should also be broadly socialized with government institutions and non-state actors in 2030 Agenda implementation.

### **Budget for 2030 Agenda implementation.**

The Government of Canada should ensure that 2030 Agenda-related policies are translated into budgets and programs to advance progress and as a means to ensure policy coherence.



### **Use the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda to guide policies for 2030 Agenda implementation.**

The Government of Canada should define how the transformative elements of the 2030 Agenda will guide overall implementation in the 2030 Agenda National Strategy. The 2030 Agenda National Strategy should demonstrate how Canada's approach will be human rights-based, inclusive and participatory, respect inter-generational equity and planetary boundaries, integrate the interlinked nature of the SDGs and leave no one behind, including Indigenous peoples, LGBTQ2S+ communities, women, refugees and diaspora communities, racialized minorities, people with disabilities, youth and seniors. The 2030 Agenda National Strategy should also identify and make use of existing institutions, policies and processes that support the transformative elements, including Canada's human rights commitments and institutions.

### **Ensure domestic, international and temporal policy coherence through a government-wide approach to 2030 Agenda implementation and collaboration with sub-national governments.**

The Government of Canada should create mechanisms and harness existing ones to ensure policy coherence in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Assessing the impacts of policies across domestic and international policy domains and with respect to future generations is an important first step. The Government of Canada should be transparent about trade-offs and work to maximize positive synergies and minimize negative impacts. There is also a need to ensure coherence with existing domestic and international commitments. Policy coherence must also consider different levels of government and maximize positive synergies. An opportunity exist to promote coherence and collaboration by making use of existing mechanisms to coordinate various levels of government, such as roundtables. Finally, national and international reporting on the 2030 Agenda should include progress on ensuring policy coherence.